

MANTI-LA SAL NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Manti-La Sal National Forest

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE 599 Price River Drive Price, UT 84501

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1. Purpose of the Public Participation Strategy

The purpose of the Public Participation Strategy is to provide a road map for how the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) will inform, engage, and collaborate with the public during each phase of the Planning process. It also provides a foundation for implementing the 2012 Planning Rule's broad commitment to engaging the public throughout process. The strategy is a joint product between the Forest and those interested in Plan Revision and will be updated as needed to foster the highest level of public participation. Indeed, because the Public Participation Strategy extends to the monitoring phase, it is intended to act as the foundation for how the Forest will collaborate with the public over the 15-20 years of the Plan. Along with an integrated public participation strategy, this document explains key concepts of the Forest Planning process.

A communication plan will be developed separately, which will provide specific information regarding contacts and mechanisms for involving the public and other agencies during revision of the Forest Plan. Additionally, specific implementation strategies will be developed for each major milestone of connecting with external entities. These implementation strategies will provide detailed plans for logistics related to setting up public meetings and workshops, for example.

Goals of the Public Participation Strategy

An effective public participation strategy provides the framework for gathering and disseminating information in a timely manner, so as to inform stakeholders and refine the Planning process, and ensure robust collaboration. To support this end, this Public Participation Strategy strives to:

- Help build and maintain working relationships, trust, capacity, and commitment to the Forest Plan Revision.
- Support shared learning and understanding between the Forest Service and public participants.
- Promote a common understanding of facts and issues that form the context for Planning and the Planning process.
- Help keep the public informed throughout sometimes lengthy and complex Planning processes.
- Be an inclusive, transparent process that strengthens Plans and adds clarity to the decision making process and the rationale for decisions.
- Help identify or clarify issues, conflicts, constraints, values, beliefs, or expectations.

2. Plan Revision Overview

This section provides basic information on Forest Plans, the legal requirements for Forest Plan Revision, the Plan Revision process, and the formal requirements for public notice and comment.

Forest Plans

The National Forest Management Act of the 1976 (NFMA) requires that each National Forest complete and periodically update a land and resources management Plan, often referred to as a Forest Plan. Forest Plans provide the overall management direction and guidance for each National Forest. A Forest Plan does not prescribe site-specific actions or projects, instead it outlines broad desired conditions, objectives, standards, and guidelines. After a Plan is in place, Forest Service managers must ensure site-specific projects or activities are consistent with the Plan.

2012 Planning Rule

Forest Service Planning regulations provide direction to managers on required content of a Forest Plan and the procedures for revising and amending Plans. The most recent National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule was published in 2012 (36 CFR 219, also known as the 2012 Planning Rule¹). In addition, the Forest Service Manual (Chapter 1929) and Forest Service Planning Handbook (1909.12) were updated in 2015 to provide further direction and guidance to managers for implementing the 2012 Planning Rule when developing, revising, and amending Forest Plans.

The 2012 Planning Rule places an emphasis on ecological and social sustainability and adaptive management. It provides for a Planning process that is aimed to track and respond to changing conditions, assumptions, and new information efficiently.

The Rule also emphasizes public participation during each phase of the Planning process. In order to gain a better understanding of the needs of the public and the benefits the National Forest provides, the Planning Rule emphasizes engagement with a diverse set of stakeholders, including:

- Local, regional, and national audiences
- Private land owners in the Plan area
- Federal, state, and local government
- Federally-recognized Tribes
- Those who may not have participated in a Planning process before, such as youth, low-income, and minority populations within the Planning area

Purpose of Forest Plans

“Plans will guide management of NFS lands so that they are ecologically sustainable and contribute to social and economic sustainability; consist of ecosystems and watersheds with ecological integrity and diverse Plant and animal communities; and have the capacity to provide people and communities with ecosystem services and multiple uses that provide a range of social, economic, and ecological benefits for the present and into the future.” (2012 Planning Rule - 36 CFR 219.1)

¹ More information about the 2012 Planning Rule and Forest Service Planning directives is available at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/Planningrule/home>

The Responsible Official, or Forest Supervisor, ultimately determines the scope and scale of opportunities for participation, balancing available resources and schedule constraints with public participation needs.

Plan Revision Process

Forest Plans are developed and revised by interdisciplinary teams (IDT) of professionals under the direction of the Forest Supervisor. The Forest Supervisor is the Responsible Official who has the authority of approving the new Forest Plan and will make the final decision of what is included in the new Plan.

Plan Revision should take about 4 years. Ultimately, the Revision process will generate a revised Forest Plan for the National Forest. Along the way, the Revision process will generate a series of interim products that reflect input to date and will identify subsequent Planning direction. Plan Revision includes the following phases, as well as some concurrent processes; each is described in more detail below.

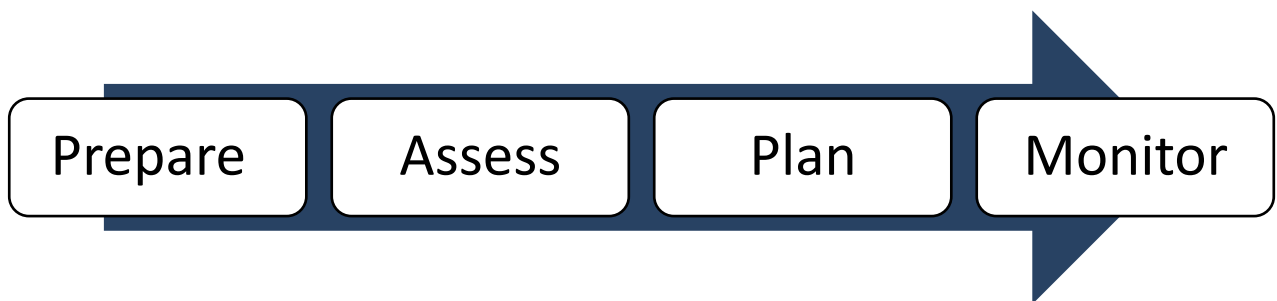


Figure 1: Steps of the Forest Plan Revision Process

Prepare

During the preparation phase of Plan Revision, we work internally to identify capacity and resources needed for the Plan Revision effort. We also conduct outreach to the public to analyze stakeholder interests and forest capacity for collaboration, conduct meetings and briefings, and utilize those findings to develop further public participation strategies. Finally, we will issue formal public notice that an Assessment phase is beginning in the Federal Register, the newspaper of record, and online.

Assess

The Assessment phase seeks to provide a clear understanding of what is known about the Plan area in the context of the broader landscape. We evaluate existing relevant information from a range of sources and information provided by the public and other governmental entities to understand the Plan area's ecological, economic, and social dimensions. This information will set the stage for informed decision-making during each Planning phase, including risks and vulnerabilities associated with long-term variability, events, and trends.

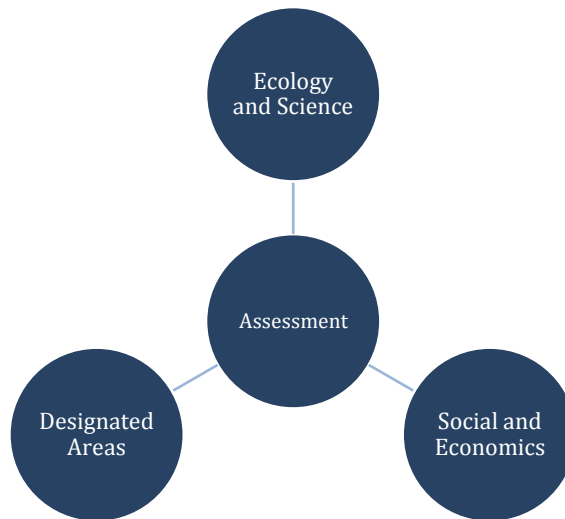
The Assessment identifies the distinctive roles and contributions of the unit within the context of the broader landscape, considering the roles of the unit in providing multiple uses, including ecosystem services, from the National Forest system lands to the local area, region, and nation. In doing so, we will consider the Planning area in the context of adjacent lands and other jurisdictions such as the federal, state, and county levels. Ultimately, the various Assessments set the foundation for determining the need to change the Forest Plan. The 2012 Planning Rule requires that Assessments be conducted for each of the following 15 topics in three major categories (36 CFR 219.6 (b)):

Assessing ecological sustainability and diversity of Plant and animal communities

1. Terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, and watersheds
2. Air, soil, and water resources and quality
3. System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, and climate change; and the ability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on the Plan area to adapt to change
4. Baseline Assessment of carbon stocks
5. Threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, and potential species of conservation concern present in the plan area

Assessing social and economic sustainability and multiple uses

6. social, cultural, and economic conditions
7. Benefits people obtain from the NFS Planning area (ecosystem services)
8. Multiple uses and their contributions to local, regional, and national economies
9. Recreation settings, opportunities and access, and scenic character
10. Renewable and nonrenewable energy and mineral resources
11. Infrastructure, such as recreational facilities and transportation and utility corridors
12. Areas of tribal importance
13. Cultural and historical resources and uses
14. Land status and ownership, use, and access patterns
15. Existing designated areas located in the Plan area including Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers, and potential need and opportunity for additional designated areas



Plan

Plan Revisions are based on the need to change the Plan, as determined in the Assessment Phase. The Responsible Official will use the Assessments, early public engagement, and other available and relevant information to determine the ***need for change***. The preliminary need for change will be published and the public will have an opportunity to review it and provide input. The need for change will provide the focus as we prepare the draft Plan and the basis for the purpose and need for the environmental analysis.

Plans developed or revised under the 2012 Planning rule include the following Plan components:

- ***Desired Conditions*** – Describe aspirations or visions of what the Plan area should look like in the future. All management direction and activities should be aimed at the achievement of the Desired Condition. They should be a specific description of desired social, economic, and/or ecological characteristics of the Plan area, or a portion of the Plan area, that are described in terms specific enough to allow progress toward their achievement.
- ***Objectives*** - Concise, measurable, and time-specific statement of a desired rate of progress toward a desired condition and should be based on reasonably foreseeable budgets. Objectives along with the strategies used to accomplish them can be thought of as the tools we will use to reach the desired conditions. Objectives are mileposts along the road toward desired conditions.
- ***Standards*** - The rules the forest will operate within as the forest develops projects to accomplish objectives and move closer to the realization of desired conditions. These are mandatory constraints on project and activity decision-making.
- ***Guidelines*** - Describe a constraint on project and activity decision-making that allows for departure from its terms, so long as the intent of the guideline is met. In other words guidelines are mandatory unless they are replaced by something that is equal to or better than the existing guideline.

- **Suitability** - Specific lands within a Plan area identified as suitable and not suitable for various multiple uses or activities based on the desired conditions applicable to those lands. Every Plan must identify those lands that are not suitable for timber production (required by National Forest Management Act).
- **Management areas or geographic areas** – these areas where special Plan components are developed, in addition to the forest wide Plan components, to guide a specific management need.

In addition to forest wide Plan components, other content is required, including discussion of priority watersheds, identification of the distinctive roles and contributions of the Plan area, the Plan monitoring program, and proposed and possible actions.

Environmental Analysis

In preparing the Forest Plan, we are required to conduct environmental effects analysis consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).² The NEPA steps run concurrent with and overlap the Planning phases of Plan Revision. They include:

- **Scoping** – scoping is an early and open process for public engagement in the proposed Plan. NEPA scoping for Plan Revision will begin with publication of a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement in the Federal Register. The notice of intent will provide the public information about the preliminary need for change.
- **Develop Proposed Plan and Alternatives** – based on the Assessments, the need for change, and public input received throughout the process we will develop a draft Plan (the proposed action for the NEPA process). In addition, we will develop alternatives to help evaluate trade-offs surrounding issues or unresolved conflicts.
- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** – We will prepare a draft EIS (DEIS) that describes the affected environment and estimates the effects of each alternative on Planning area resources. The DEIS will be published. Formal notice of availability will be published in the federal register and in the newspaper of record, initiating a 90-day public comment period.
- **Draft Decision/Proposed Plan** – Following the comment period, we will review and respond to the public comments received. Public input will be used to refine the Plan and prepare a final EIS. The final proposed Plan, FEIS, and a draft Record of Decision will be published and formal notice of their availability will be posted in the federal register and in the newspaper of record.
- **Objection Period** – The objection procedures are a pre-decisional review process that provides an additional opportunity for the public to express their concerns to the Forest Service prior to a final decision by the Responsible Official. Publication of the legal notice for the draft record of decision initiates a 60-day objection filing period. Only those who have submitted substantive formal comments³ during opportunities for public comment are eligible to object.

² See also the Council on Environmental Quality's "Citizen's Guide to NEPA" at https://ceq.doe.gov/publications/citizens_guide_to_nepa.html

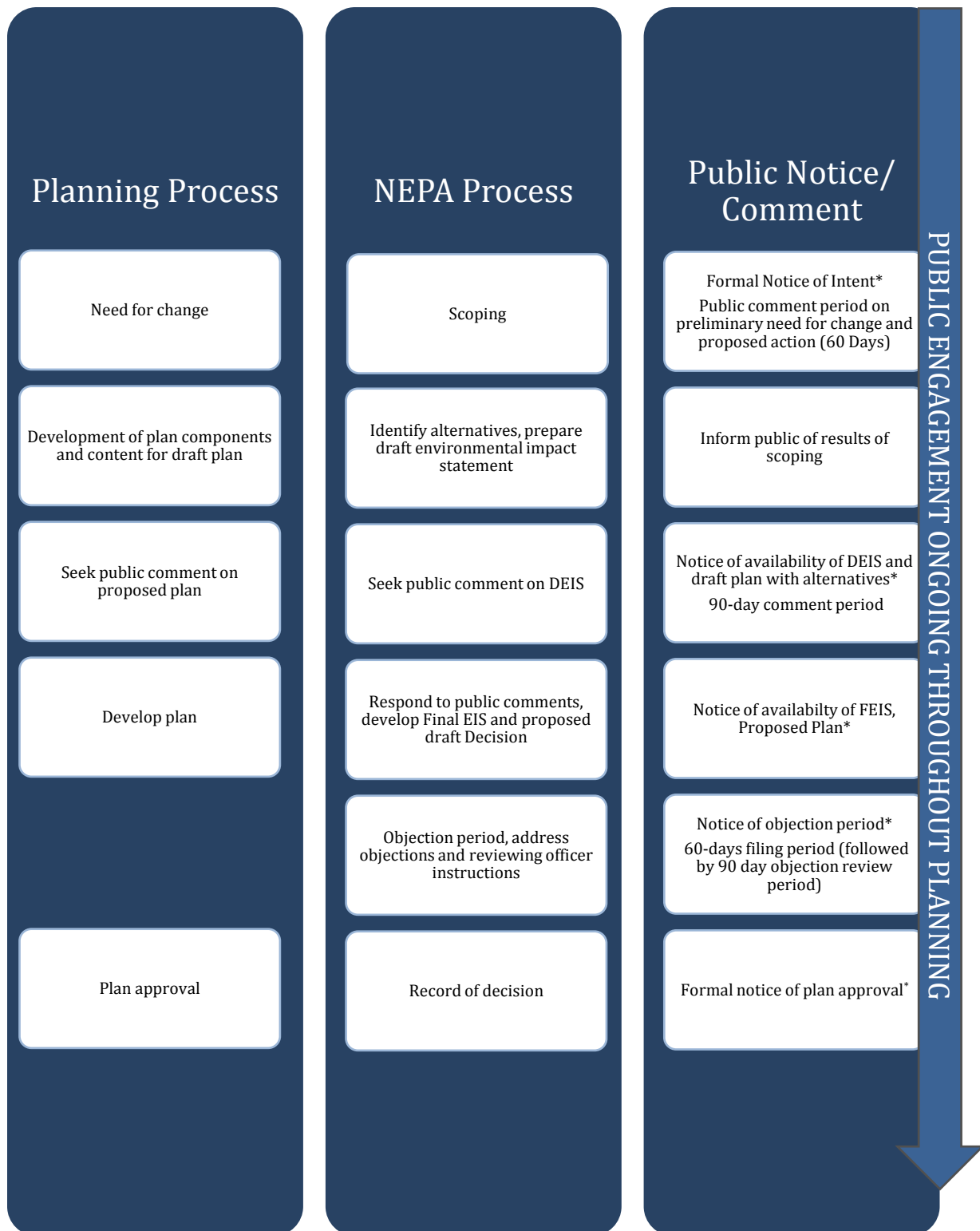
³ Substantive formal comment is defined as "written comments submitted to, or oral comments recorded by, the responsible official or his designee during an opportunity for public participation provided during the Planning process, and attributed to the individual or entity providing them. Comments are considered

Objections must demonstrate a link between the objector's prior substantive formal comments and the content of the objection. Eligible objections will be reviewed by the objection Reviewing Officer (the Regional Forester) over a 90 day period. Objectors and interested persons will be invited to participate in resolution meetings. At the conclusion of the objection period, the Reviewing Officer will issue a response to objections and may issue instructions to the Responsible Official.

- **Final Plan Approval/Record of Decision** – The final Plan approval and record of decision may be issued as soon as the Reviewing Officer's response is issued and any instructions are addressed. Formal notice of the final Plan will be posted in the federal register.

Figure 2 shows how the Plan Revision steps and NEPA steps relate. It also displays the required formal public notice and designated opportunities for public comment that occur throughout the Planning and NEPA process. The NEPA process runs parallel with opportunities for public engagement and collaboration, beginning with the Assessment process (prior to NEPA), and continuing through the Need for Change, Desired Conditions, Alternatives Development, and Analysis. When a new Draft Forest Plan is available, individuals will have the opportunity to participate in the formal comment period and then in the objection process. While there are specific required formal notice and comment periods shown in Figure 2, it's important to note that additional public engagement will occur throughout the process and it's described in more detail in the Public Participation section of this document.

substantive when they are within the scope of the proposal are specific to the proposal, have a direct relationship to the proposal, and include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider." (36 CFR 219)



* Formal notices includes publishing a notice in the Federal Register and/or the newspaper of record

Figure 2: Planning process steps, National Environmental Policy Act steps, and required public notice and comment periods

Plan Implementation, Monitoring, and Adaptive Management

Once the new plan is in place, site-specific projects will be authorized to move the Forest towards the Desired Conditions. The Forest will also begin monitoring activities according to the new monitoring plan. As the Plan is implemented and projects move forward, we will analyze Plan and project monitoring data. The rule calls for periodically publishing monitoring reports and updating the monitoring plan. When new information or science emerges or monitoring suggests changed conditions, we may adjust the Plan content or amend the Plan to change specific Plan components.

Concurrent Processes

Several processes occur concurrently with the Planning process. These concurrent processes begin in the Assessment phase and will continue throughout the Planning Revision process. Some of them, such as Wilderness Inventory and Evaluation, result in final agency decisions which will be documented in the final Record of Decision for the Forest Plan. Others, like Species of Conservation Concern, are a Regional Forester decision, which will be made outside but concurrent with the Plan Decision.

3. Public Participation

Intent of Public Participation

Public participation is designed to help build and maintain working relationships, trust, capacity, and commitment to the Forest Plan; support shared learning and understanding between the Forest Service and public participants; promote a common understanding of facts and issues that form the context for Planning and the Planning process; help keep the public informed throughout sometimes lengthy and complex Planning processes; to value an inclusive, transparent process that strengthens plans and adds clarity to the decision making process and the rationale for decisions; and to help identify or clarify issues, conflicts, constraints, values, beliefs or expectations.

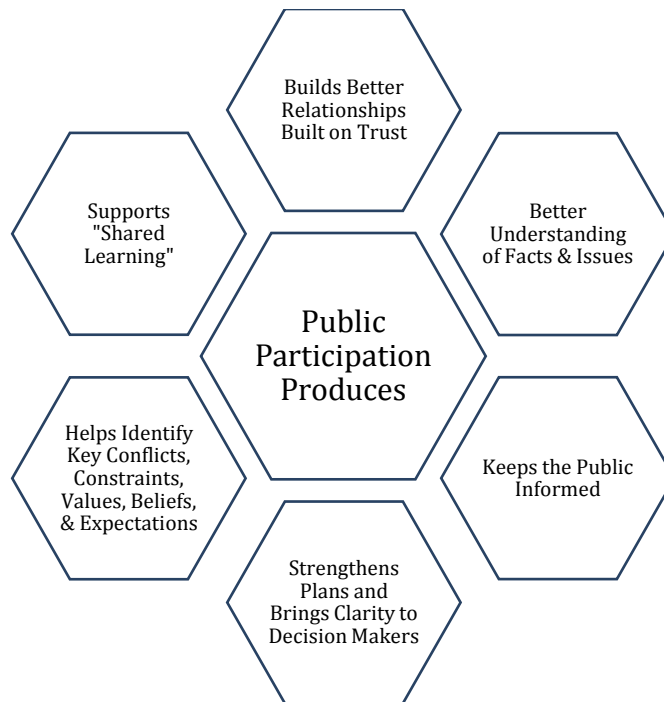


Figure 3. Diagram of the Benefits of Public Participation

Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate

There are a lot of different ways that the Forest Service can and does involve the public and special partners in management decisions. Most people are familiar with traditional public involvement where the Forest Service has a decision to make and uses formal engagements and comment periods to solicit public opinions and thoughts on the decision. While this process is helpful, it falls short of “learning” from other perspectives and the formality of the process can exclude some participants.

The International Association of Public Participation has created a spectrum to characterize scales of public involvement, as depicted below. It is important to note that moving from *informing* to *collaborating* takes greater time and investment, which can produce more sustainable results with improved trust and ownership.

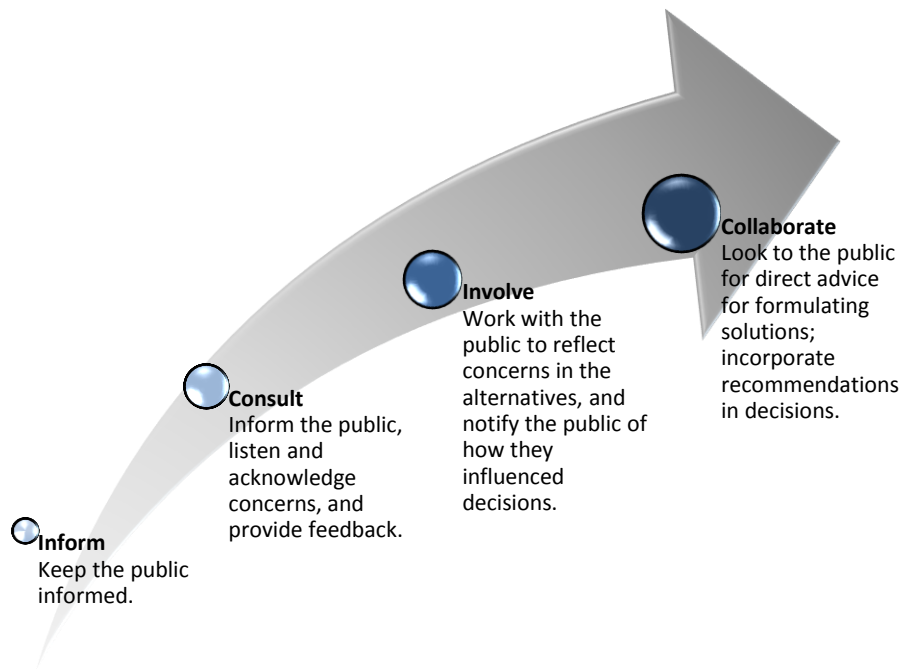


Figure 4. Diagram of the Public Participation Spectrum, derived in part from the International Association for Public Participation.

Public involvement is how the Forest Service has generally designed public participation for the past 30 years. NEPA prescribes several regular activities of public participation such as public meetings, comment periods, etc. Public involvement will continue for Forest Plan Revision and will run parallel and complementary to other public participation activities. The public can expect opportunities designed around key milestones to participate in public meetings, open houses, and official comment periods when the Forest Service is looking for issues, developing alternatives, and evaluating a draft Plan.

Input received during public involvement activities will be one source of input to help inform the contents and direction found in the Forest Plan. Public involvement activities are designed not to require a lot of investment from the public, but rather to generate opinions and thoughts. Input received during public involvement activities may also provide useful information to help support and sustain collaboration.

Public Participation Opportunities by Phase

Each phase of the Planning process requires different inputs from the public. To support the solicitation of this information and ensure the interdisciplinary team (IDT) is getting the right information when it needs it, the Team will engage the public at each phase of the planning process: Assessment, Planning, and Monitoring. The following outlines the public participation activities the IDT will undertake during each phase, as well as the methods the Team will use.

Assessment Phase

The intent of public participation in the Assessment phase is to provide the opportunity for the public to share its knowledge of existing forest conditions with the Interdisciplinary Team and to identify concerns about trends and perceptions of risks to social, economic, and ecological systems. Accordingly, the IDT's solicitation of public feedback during the Assessment Phase will be directed at gaining information in the 15 areas found at 36 CFR 219.6 (b) and in this strategy:

While the Forest maintains data covering much of these topics, other Federal and State agencies, local governments, and individuals likely have access to unique data in these topic areas. Accordingly, the IDT will establish strong relationships and use various outreach and collaboration efforts in the Assessment phase to facilitate the transfer of this information to the Team.

The IDT will use public meetings and workshops during the Assessment, the first of which are scheduled in July 2016, followed by a second set in September 2016. The focus of the July meetings will be to inform the public of the Forest Plan Revision process, though feedback will also be accepted, while the emphasis of the September meetings will be soliciting available information related to the assessment phase of Plan Revision.

The Forest will also use its Planning page on the Forest Service's official webpage (www.fs.usda.gov/main/mantilasal/landmanagement/planning) to post information and solicit information. The Team will also use its 'Storybook' website, an interactive online map, to provide information to and solicit feedback from the public (URL coming soon). Photographs and meeting notes from public meetings will be posted to these sites to inform those who were unable to make the meetings.

During the Assessment Phase, the following opportunities will be available for public participation:

- *At the start of the Assessment, we will inform the public about the 15 topic areas and encourage the public to share their knowledge of existing Forest conditions, current uses, and trends over time.*
 - *During the development of the Assessment, we will solicit public input on specific elements of the Assessment.*
 - *We will provide notification that the draft Assessment report is available for review.*
-

Finally, the Forest will begin the process of identifying potential Cooperating Agencies in the summer and fall of 2016, which will play a special collaboration role in the later phases of the Plan Revision process. Those seeking Cooperating Agency status must have critical subject matter expertise or data relating to the Plan Revision.

Planning Phase

Public participation opportunities are provided to identify public interests and concerns regarding the plan area, develop zones of agreement relevant to plan components, include the public in designing effective plan components, and ensure other participation as needed. Public participation early in this phase of the planning process (in particular, public feedback or comment on the preliminary need for change) will help ensure that the focus of the planning effort reflects public concerns and community needs.

There are certain steps that are fundamental to the plan development process and for which public participation is important:

- ***Identifying the need for change*** – Identification of the need for change is intended to help focus the planning effort. We will notify the public of a preliminary need to change the plan to inform development of plan components and other plan content at the beginning of the planning phase. We will include the preliminary need for change in the public notice initiating the planning process and accept comment on the preliminary need for change either in writing or during early public meetings of the plan development phase.
- ***Developing potential plan components and other plan content*** – Approaches to public participation in the development of plan components will be tailored to the needs and capacity of the public, taking into account the anticipated complexity of the planning exercise.

- ***Ensuring the use of best available scientific information (BASI) in plan development*** – The IDT will document how BASI was used to inform the plan decision. Public feedback regarding the accuracy, reliability, and relevance of scientific information helps ensure the use and documentation of BASI.
- ***Opportunity to comment on a proposed plan and accompanying NEPA documents*** – Public notification and use of notice and comment procedures is required (36 CFR 219.16). The Forest will ensure that meaningful opportunities for public engagement early in the 90 day comment period are provided so that members of the public may be well informed about the proposed plan and provide meaningful comments. In addition to accepting and responding to written comments on a proposed plan and draft EIS, the Forest will hold public meetings to interact with the public about the documents.

In addition to these general opportunities for public participation, the Forest will incorporate opportunity for public participation at key junctures, as dictated by regulation:

- ***Species of conservation concern*** – The Forest will provide opportunities for the public to provide input on SCC, through the public meetings and the Forest Plan Revision webpage.
- ***Suitability of lands*** – Similar opportunities will be provided for public participation in providing input on the suitability of lands.

Objection Process and Monitoring Phase

The Forest will notify the public at the beginning of the objection period—online and through the Federal Register and Newspaper of record—after which the public will have 60 days to file objections. The Forest will also provide a notice of all filed objections after the 60-day comment period (both online and through the newspaper of record) and a notice of the final approved plan. The approval notice will be posted online, as well as published in the Federal Register and Newspaper of record.

- Only those who submitted substantive comments during the official comment periods can file objections. The Regional Forester has 90 days to review objections.

The intent of public participation during monitoring is full transparency, to give people access to all information that is developed through monitoring activities, and to obtain public feedback on what the monitoring information suggests about the effectiveness of the land management plan. Specifically, public participation activities during this phase will be aimed at:

- Obtaining public input on potential questions and indicators that will comprise the monitoring program.
- Developing a shared sense of ownership and support for the monitoring program.
- Providing opportunities to design and carry out multi-party monitoring.
- Learning of other monitoring information available.
- Improving the plan monitoring program.

Public participation opportunities during the Monitoring Phase will be made, “To the extent practicable, appropriate, and relevant to the monitoring questions in the plan monitoring program, plan monitoring programs and broader-scale strategies...”⁴ and will take into account:

- Existing national and regional inventory, monitoring, and research programs of the Agency, including from the NFS, State and Private Forestry, and Research and Development, and of other governmental and non-governmental entities;
- Opportunities to design and carry out multi-party monitoring with other Forest Service units, Federal, State or local government agencies, scientists, partners, and members of the public; and
- Opportunities to design and carry out monitoring with federally recognized Indian Tribes.⁵

The Forest will notify the public of substantive changes proposed to the plan monitoring program and provide opportunity to comment. These notices will be made based on the nature and extent of the change, but at a minimum will be posted online.

- The Forest will conduct a Biennial Evaluation of New Information gathered through the plan monitoring program and relevant information from the broader-scale strategy. The public will be issued the written report through the Forest’s planning webpage. Public meetings or other notices may also be used, as appropriate.

Notification, Comment, and Response Timeline

Federal laws and regulations stipulate that the public must be officially notified at several junctures during the Planning process. This matrix below identifies the timing and content of those notifications. It also provides a timeline for when the public is required to respond with comments. These mandatory notice and comment periods provide an opportunity for the Forest to solicit, receive, and incorporate feedback from the public. The Forest may decide to issue additional notices in the Federal Register and Newspaper of Record as necessary.

⁴ FSH 1909.12 – LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 40 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

⁵ (36 CFR 219.12(c)).

			Mechanisms for Notice			
Year	Phase	Notice	Online	Federal Register	Newspaper of Record	Comment Period
Spring 2016- Spring 2017	Assessment	Initiation of the assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		Availability of final assessment	Yes	No	No	
Summer 2017-2019	Plan Development	Initiation of the development of the plan revision	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		NEPA Requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	NEPA Requirements	Scoping results	Yes	No	No	60 Days
		Proposed plan revision and DEIS available for public review and comment	Yes	Yes	Yes	90 Days
	Plan Finalization	Beginning of the objection period	Yes	Yes	Yes	60 Days*
		Notice of all filed objections	Yes	No	Yes	
		Notice to approve the plan revision	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2020 and Beyond	Monitoring	Availability of monitoring evaluation reports	Yes	No	No	
		Proposed changes to monitoring program	Yes	No	No	
		Availability of results of broader scale monitoring	Yes	No	No	
	Administrative changes	Administrative changes other than changes to the monitoring program.	Yes	No	No	

**Only those who submitted substantive comments during the official comment periods can submit objections. The Regional Forester has 90 days to review objections.*

 Public Comment Period

Public Participation Occurs Throughout Every Stage

Communication Methods

The Forest will use the full spectrum of traditional and non-traditional communication and collaboration methods to engage and collaborate with our diverse publics. The focus is on users of the Forest and those interested in management of the Forest. In addition to engaging our stakeholders, communication between team members and within the agency is critical. Accordingly, some of the outreach tools and methods are designed to facilitate collaboration.

- **Public Participation Strategy** – The Strategy is intended as both an internal and external document that guide the ways in which the Forest engages the public. It also sets expectations for how the Forest will include the public.
- **Professional facilitators** – Dispute resolution and professional facilitators may be used to provide an objective third party to navigate sensitive or controversial topics, on an as needed basis.
- **Mailers and Flyers** – Mailers will be sent to the Forest’s Plan Revision contact list to alert them of public meetings and provide additional information. Flyers will be hung at local public places, including grocery stores and Forest offices, and will be used to notify the public of Plan Revision meetings and educate the public about the process.
- **Radio** – Local radio broadcasts will be used for informing the public about the Plan Revision process and to provide notification of meetings and other relevant information about the Plan Revision. Radio broadcasts in other languages, such as Spanish, may also be used to target minority stakeholders.
- **Newspaper Releases** – In addition to providing public notices at points prescribed by the 2012 Planning Rule, publishing meeting notices and other relevant information in the local newspaper of record will be used. Minority populations can be targeted through the use of newspapers printed in foreign languages.
- **Federal register** – The Federal Register will be used to publish notices at the points prescribed by the 2012 Planning rule, as highlighted in the matrix above.
- **Congressional staff briefings** – Periodic updates will be made to local Congressional members and their staffs.
- **Stakeholder interviews** – Stakeholders may be interviewed to solicit feedback concerning the ways in which they prefer to participate in the Planning process to ensure maximum utility of outreach efforts. Interviews may also be conducted to solicit feedback about Plan recommendations.
- **Co-hosted meetings** – Co-hosted meetings may be coordinated with counties, other agencies, and special interests to facilitate broader participation. These other entities are often able to better connect with certain segments of the population.
- **Community open houses** – Community open houses provide opportunities for stakeholders to provide input and to be involved in the process. Open houses will be used leading up to and throughout the Planning process to provide information to the public and solicit feedback. Meetings will occur at the State, County (including Associations of Governments), Tribal, and Local levels, and may include schools to target youth populations historically uninvolved in the planning process. Notes, feedback, and other pertinent information generated from meetings will be posted to the Plan Revision webpage to show the public how their feedback is being used in the planning process.

- **Collaborative workshops** – workshops will be held as needed to provide collaborative forums to receive input on specific topics. These workshops will be focused on certain aspects of planning components where the Forest is seeking feedback.
- **Social media** – Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Yonder are powerful tools to interact with the public, particularly Millennials and other adopters of social media technologies. Indeed, research indicates a larger number of Americans across all ages and demographics are increasingly turning to social media for news and other information. Accordingly, these platforms will be used to alert the public about meetings and other important events; provide information and other updates; and to solicit feedback, ideas, suggestions, and comments from stakeholders.
- **Manti-La Sal National Forest Website** – Like social media, much of the interested public receive their information online instead of through traditional print media and news outlets. The Manti-La Sal National Forest Website and Plan Revision Storybook webpages will be used to inform the public about the Plan Revision process, timeline, and opportunities for collaboration. Pertinent collaboration and informational materials—such as this Public Participation Strategy and the 2012 Planning Rule—will also be published on these webpages to provide greater details should the public want to explore further.

Public Participants

The Manti-La Sal National Forest stakeholders are diverse, and so too must be the engagement methods used to reach them. Below is a list of key stakeholders and brief explanation of the outreach and engagement tools the Forest will use to target reach, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach is not sufficient to reach all stakeholders. A more detailed list of stakeholders, to include State and Federal agency and tribe names, will be included in the Communication Plan, which will follow this Strategy in publication. Moreover, it is important to note that much like the rest of this document, the methods of engagement for these stakeholders likely will change as the Forest interacts with them and learns what approaches work best.

- **State and Federal Agencies** –Public engagement activities will be coordinated with appropriate Federal and State agencies during the process. Specifically, internal memorandums, emails, and meetings between agency public affairs and public participation specialists will be used to ensure continuity of action between outreach efforts.
 - *From the NFMA:* “...the Secretary of Agriculture shall develop, maintain and, as appropriate, revise land and resource management plans for units of the National Forest System, coordinated with the land and resource management planning processes of State and local governments and other Federal agencies,” (16 U.S.C. 1604(a)).
 - The planning process should build upon existing cooperative relationships with State, local, and Tribal governments and other Federal agencies. The Forest will attempt to designate a *single* Agency primary point of contact for intergovernmental cooperation during the planning process.

- **Tribes** – Native Americans play a unique role in the Plan Revision process, as dictated by Executive Order 13175 *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*, the *National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA)*, and the 2012 Panning Rule. The Forest will meet all requirements to consult and collaborate with Native American Tribes and recognize that areas we currently manage are ancestral lands to many Tribes, creating the need to consult and/or collaborate with these Tribes, tribal leaders, practitioners, culture keepers, and unaffiliated native descendants. The Forest will reach out to all affected Tribes on an ongoing basis throughout the Revision process.
- **State, County, and Local Governments** – Local government will play a pivotal role in building credibility and acceptability of Forest Planning activities. Given recent contention over Federal ownership of Utah public lands, the Forest will emphasize collaboration and engagement across the full spectrum of local leadership. Working with these agencies and establishing fruitful working arrangements, including official Agency Cooperating Agreements where appropriate, will garner credibility in the eyes of local populations, many of whom have historically been opposed to any Federal government interaction. The Forest may also invite these agencies to participate in the process as official Cooperating Agencies, though the details of those arrangements have not been finalized.
 - It is anticipated the Forest Service will engage with Carbon, Juab, Sevier, Utah, Emery, Grand, Mesa (CO), Montrose (CO), San Juan, Sanpete counties as potential Cooperating Agencies. The State of Utah and select agencies likely will also be Cooperating Agencies for the Plan Revision.
 - While the Forest expects the Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office (PLPCO) to be the clearing house for all official state comments, the Forest hopes to coordinate with, state agencies throughout the planning process.
- **State and Federal Congressional Representatives** – Congressional representatives are often the first to hear of issues with land management and Planning and thus are a useful sensor for understanding the needs of the public. Maintaining a productive relationship with State and Federal Congressional representatives will enable the Forest to learn of issues before they develop into bigger problems and better include public feedback into the process. As such, in addition to the legally required notification events, the Forest will maintain communication with these entities through email, official memorandums, and face-to-face meetings.
- **Youth** – Given that Forest Plans remain in effect for many years, it is critical that the youth of today are involved in the planning process, as they will be the future stewards of the Forest. Engaging and educating them during the planning process will ensure that they are prepared for this critical future role. Social media and other digital methods will be used to engage the youth, and presentations may be held at local schools. Because it is often difficult to connect with younger generations, sensing sessions may be used during school visits to refine youth outreach methods. Different strategies may be developed for youth in the 5-10 year range and youth in the 11-18 year range.

- **Minorities** – Minority populations comprise roughly ten percent of the population in the local counties; the number is even greater in other areas of the state from which visitors originate. The largest minority segment is the Spanish speaking community, while a smaller segment is made up of African American and Asian communities. Minority populations offer valuable insights into the planning and outreach processes and have historically been underutilized in Forest Planning, as the 2012 Planning Rule highlights. To reverse this trend the Forest will emphasize minority outreach efforts by potentially producing multi-lingual notices and information brochures.
- **Low-income populations** – Much of the populations living within the counties adjacent to the Manti-La Sal National Forest fall below the poverty line, and these populations are avid users of the Forest. For instance, in the city of Price, roughly 20 percent of household earnings fall below the government’s \$20,000 poverty line. Many of these people generally lack access to non-essential services such as internet and television. As such, the IDT will use more traditional approaches to target this population segment, including posting informational brochures and notices at grocery stores and other frequented public spaces, as well as at public meetings.
- **Rural populations** – Much of the Manti-La Sal National Forest exists in rural areas far from District and Regional offices. For some of these communities, time and financial restrictions may preclude or reduce their involvement in the planning process. The Forest will disseminate information about the planning process via email and in local newspapers to reach rural populations. Public meetings will also be held in each of the Forest’s 3 districts to ensure broad participation.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations and Special Interest Groups** – Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and special interest groups are sometimes able to more effectively connect with their member and constituents than government organizations. Engaging these entities will enable the Forest to leverage these organizations’ special relationships with the community to navigate the Planning process and garner broader participation. The Forest will look to use co-hosted meetings to draw participation from these groups, as well as email correspondence.

Roles

Ensuring robust public participation is a team effort. Each member brings with them a host of skillsets and personal contacts that can be leveraged to ensure broad public participation. Accordingly, IDT support to the public participation is needed throughout the Plan Revision process. Below is an overview of the key responsibilities of each participant.

- **Forest Supervisor** – Provides guidance, reviews, and approves the Public Participation Strategy and Public Participation Mailing List; participates in public and co-hosted meetings; and assists with communication with a variety of legislative, state, agency, and special interest group contacts.

- **Plan Revision Team Leader** – Provides guidance and supervision of public participation activities; and reviews public participation correspondence, marketing materials, and other publications including the Public Participation Strategy; participates in public and co-hosted meetings.
- **Partnership Coordinator** – Lead representative all Forest Plan Revision public participation, collaboration, and marketing; builds and maintains relationships with local, state, federal agencies, special interest groups, Tribes, landowners, and other stakeholders; schedules public meetings; maintains Forest Plan Revision website; produces handouts, notices, and pamphlets; produces and maintains the Public Participation Strategy; establishes Plan Revision Mailing List; maintains records of all public participation documents; and supports Plan Revision Team Leader as needed.
- **District Rangers** – Review and provides feedback on the Public Participation Strategy, FACA Committee documents, and the mailing list; facilitate transfer of public inputs from District’s stakeholders to the IDT core team; participate in District public meetings; and provide tailored recommendations for public participation methods within the District.
- **Supervisor’s Office Staff, Core and Extended IDT Members, and Support Staff** – Review public participation marketing documents and Public Participation Strategy; and provide feedback and inputs on the mailing list.
- **Cooperating Agencies** – As solicited, provide inputs on public participation; provide inputs on the mailing list; assist Partnership Coordinator with coordinating meetings; and communicate agency inputs into the Planning process.

4. Collaboration Plan

Collaboration happens when the Forest Service and its collaboration partners share information with each other and work to generate group ideas that have substantial support for informing the Forest Service decision maker about some options to consider in revising the Forest Plan.

- Special emphasis should be given to encouraging participation by State, local, and Tribal governments, including identifying opportunities for public collaborative processes and opportunities for participation in such processes.
- Ideas and thinking generated from collaboration can be one powerful source of input to Forest Service decision makers and coupled with the input from public involvement and cooperation/consultation with special partners can make Forest Service decisions stronger.

Collaboration will run parallel to the Forest efforts to inform and involve planning participants. Collaboration design will be determined by those participants who are willing to spend the time and effort required to be part of a collaboration effort. Generally collaboration does not involve large

groups of people and it is characterized by round tables and working sessions on specific topics. The Forest Service is one participant at the table along with other equals.

- Since there is more than one Forest Plan Revision going on in the Intermountain Region and in the State of Utah, depending upon the collaboration topic, collaboration may be designed at a scale above the individual National Forest.

Collaboration Workshops

The Forest recognizes that there is a diverse group of interested stakeholders to the Forest Plan Revision. These stakeholders have different levels of time and commitment to put forth in helping the forest revise the Forest Plan. A framework for involvement will be created to value the different kinds of participation that participants can provide to the Forest. Areas for collaboration will be identified as a result of meetings held about the assessment topics. . Expectations and commitments will be refined, adapted, and polished by those who identify with a focused topic or issue. The future design and sideboards for collaboration will also be created and incorporated into the Public Participation Strategy.

Expectations and Commitments from Forest Service

- The Forest will provide a variety of ways for stakeholders to get information about Plan Revision (e.g., electronic, in-person, written).
- The Forest will work with collaboration partners to document and share summaries of Plan Revision engagements with all participants on the project webpage.
- The Forest will identify areas for collaboration to value everyone's time and effort.
- The Forest will provide most of the "staff" work to support collaboration and public participation activities.
- The Forest will work to value transparency through timely, complete, and useful information sharing.
- When "substantial agreement" emerges from a variety of Plan Revision activities (e.g., collaboration, cooperation, consultation, public involvement), the Forest Leadership will carry forward these ideas into the development of the Plan to the extent that it is legally permissible.

Expectations of the Public and Collaboration Stakeholders

A successful Plan will be built upon the meaningful involvement of a broad set of stakeholders. The Forest expects all stakeholders to honor common values in this effort. To this end, the Forest requests stakeholders take note of the following recommendations and use them as a guide to successful participation in the Plan Revision process:

- Stakeholders are *expected to bring meaningful information*, examples, and data to the table to enrich the group discussion.
- Stakeholders are invited to *seek understanding*, demonstrate good listening skills, and be willing to change their opinions when compelling information is presented.

- We hope that collaboration participants will commit to *remain at the table* throughout the effort. All collaboration will be open to the public so participation may vary over time.
- All participants are expected to treat each other with *respect*.
- The hallmark of meaningful collaboration is that participants are *talking to each other* and not necessarily to the Forest Service.
- Participants are welcome to *bring comments, suggestions, feedback, and questions* to the Forest Service at any time during the process and the questions may relate to process or content.
- Participants can expect that they will *receive feedback* from the FS when they participate, but they cannot expect that all suggestions will be incorporated into the revised Forest Plan.
- Collaboration participants are expected to *bring capacity* to the table to help the effort. This might mean staff assistance (for things like note taking), provision of refreshments, help with venues, etc.
- All meetings will be open to the public and all meeting materials and notes will be publicly available.
- The group will be seeking information from individuals, not consensus from the group. The Forest Service cannot ask for group consensus because it suggests the group is making a decision upon which the agency will act.
- Participating in collaborative Planning workshops does not limit anyone's activity during the NEPA process. Individuals from collaborative Planning workshops can fully participate in the NEPA process including submitting formal comments or challenging decisions.